



MEETING DATE: 08-07-06

ITEM NO:

4

## COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

DATE: AUGUST 3, 2006

TO: MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL

FROM: DEBRA J. FIGONE, TOWN MANAGER

A handwritten signature in cursive script, likely belonging to Debra J. Figone.

SUBJECT: ADOPT RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE DONATION OF AN EL CAMINO REAL BELL FROM THE CALIFORNIA BELL COMPANY AND THE INSTALLATION OF THE BELL FROM EAGLE SCOUT BRIAN FREUND

### RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt resolution accepting the donation of an El Camino Real bell from the California Bell Company and the installation of the bell from Eagle Scout Brian Freund

### BACKGROUND:

The California Bell Company has been working with Eagle Scout, Brian Freund, who would like to install an El Camino Real bell in Los Gatos as an Eagle Scout project. The company proposes to donate the bell to the Town, with Brian installing it with the supervision of Town staff.

### DISCUSSION:

Beginning in 1906, bells were placed along the El Camino Real from San Diego to Sonoma linking 21 missions, pueblos and four presidios. The route from the Santa Cruz mission to the Santa Clara mission roughly followed Highway 17 and Winchester Blvd., and was considered part of the El Camino Real. Over the years, local organizations and state and federal highway agencies have supported the installation of the bells along the El Camino Real. Caltrans will be celebrating the centennial of the installation of the first El Camino Real bell on August 15, 2006 in Los Angeles. Attachment 1 describes the history of the El Camino Real and the bells, and includes a photograph of the bell.

The California Bell Company is one of the companies that work with communities and individuals who are interested in installing a bell. The bell produced by this company is based

PREPARED BY: PAMELA S. JACOBS  
ASSISTANT TOWN MANAGER

A handwritten signature in cursive script, likely belonging to Pamela S. Jacobs.

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Reviewed by: PSJ Assistant Town Manager AL Town Attorney  
\_\_\_\_ Clerk Administrator \_\_\_\_ Finance \_\_\_\_ Community Development

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MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL

SUBJECT: ADOPT RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE DONATION OF AN EL CAMINO  
REAL BELL FROM THE CALIFORNIA BELL COMPANY AND THE  
INSTALLATION OF THE BELL FROM EAGLE SCOUT BRIAN FREUND  
AUGUST 3, 2006

on the original 1906 mold. Communities do not need to be located along the El Camino Real to install a bell.

Parks and Public Works staff has worked with Brian to identify an appropriate location for the bell, considering the criteria of visibility, proximity to the original El Camino Real route, and ease of installation. The recommended location is at the east end of the Main St. bridge near the trailhead of the Los Gatos Creek Trail. This location would work well from a visibility standpoint, as it is on one of the main downtown streets. It is a good location from a historical perspective, as the El Camino Real route was nearby. An existing tree well at this location would provide a place for installation that would not require removal of sidewalk. Previous trees planted in this tree well have not done well; thus, the tree well could serve as a good location for the bell. A small brown sign reading "Historic El Camino Real" will be installed on the sign.

CONCLUSION:

The donation and installation of an El Camino Real bell will add a historical point of interest to Los Gatos, as it will mark the location of an early El Camino Real route. Staff recommends that Council accept the donation of the bell from the California Bell Company and the installation of the bell from Eagle Scout Brian Freund.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

Is not a project defined under CEQA, and no further action is required.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The El Camino Real bell and the majority costs of its installation will be donated to the Town. Costs to supervise the installation and provide the top covering at the site of the installation can be absorbed in the Parks and Public Works operating budget.

Attachment

"Trails and Roads: El Camino Real" page from the California Highways website

RESOLUTION NO.

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF LOS GATOS ACCEPTING  
THE DONATION OF AN EL CAMINO REAL BELL FROM THE CALIFORNIA BELL  
COMPANY AND THE INSTALLATION OF THE BELL FROM  
EAGLE SCOUT BRIAN FREUND

**WHEREAS**, an early route of the El Camino Real connecting the Santa Cruz mission to the Santa Clara mission followed Highway 17 and Winchester Blvd. through Los Gatos, and;

**WHEREAS**, beginning in 1906, bells were placed along the El Camino Real to mark the route, and over the years local organizations and state and federal highway agencies have supported the installation of the bells, and:

**WHEREAS**, Eagle Scout Brian Freund wishes to install a bell in Los Gatos as an Eagle Scout project, and the California Bell Company wishes to donate a bell to the Town for this purpose.

**RESOLVED**, by the Town Council of the Town of Los Gatos, County of Santa Clara, State of California, that the Town of Los Gatos hereby accepts the donation of an El Camino Real bell from the California Bell Company and the installation of the bell from Eagle Scout Brian Freund.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** at a \_\_\_\_\_ meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Los Gatos, California, held on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 200\_\_ by the following vote:

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

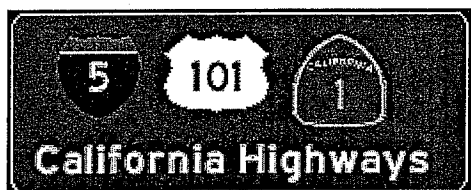
**SIGNED:**

MAYOR OF THE TOWN OF LOS GATOS  
LOS GATOS, CALIFORNIA

ATTEST:

CLERK ADMINISTRATOR OF THE TOWN OF LOS GATOS  
LOS GATOS, CALIFORNIA

#1



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# California Highways

## Trails and Roads: El Camino Real

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### Official State Definition

The official state definition of El Camino Real is as follows (per AB 1707, Chapter 739, 10/12/2001):

State highway routes embracing portions of I-280, Route 82, Route 238, US 101, I-5, Route 72, Route 12, Route 37, Route 121, Route 87, Route 162, Route 185, Route 92, and Route 123 and connecting city streets and county roads thereto, and extending in a continuous route from Sonoma southerly to the international border and near the route historically known as El Camino Real shall be known and designated as "El Camino Real."

The pre-AB 1707 definition (established by Assembly Bill 1769, Chapter 1569, in 1959) was:

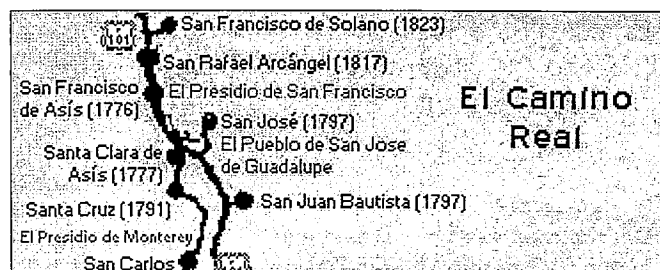
State highway routes embracing portions of I-280, Route 82, US 101, I-5, and Route 72, and connecting city streets and county roads thereto, and extending in a continuous route from San Francisco southerly to the international border and near the route historically known as El Camino Real are known and designated as "El Camino Real."

Note that there are other routes that are part of El Camino Real, most significantly San Diego County Route S11.



### Highway History

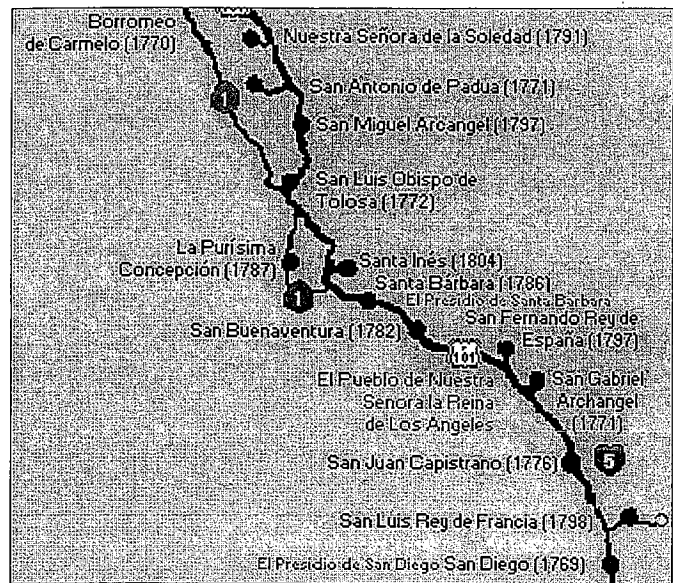
The history of El Camino Real and its bells, is quite interesting. At the same time that the American colonies were rebelling against England, a handful of Spaniards and Mexicans established outposts up the California coast. The first was established in 1769 at San Diego, when



they established a fortress and a Franciscan mission. From that point, a series of small self-reliant religious missions were established. Each was a day's travel apart and linked by El Camino Real, Overall, El Camino Real ("The King's Highway") linked 21 missions, pueblos and four presidios from San Diego to Sonoma. These missions, pueblos, and presidios include:

- **Missions:**

1. San Francisco de Solano (Sonoma Mission) (1823). Sonoma County.
2. San Rafael Arcángel (1817) . Marin County.
3. San Francisco de Asís [also known as Mission Delores] (1776). San Francisco County.
4. San José (1797). Alameda County.
5. Santa Clara de Asís (1777) Santa Clara County.
6. Santa Cruz (1791). Santa Cruz County.
7. San Juan Bautista (1797). San Benito County.
8. San Carlos Borromeo de Carmelo (1770), also known as Carmel Mission. Monterey County
9. San Antonio de Padua (1771). Monterey County.
10. Nuestra Señora de la Soledad (1791) . Monterey County.
11. San Miguel Arcangel (1797). San Luis Obispo County.
12. San Luis Obispo de Tolosa (1772). San Luis Obispo County.
13. La Purísima Concepción (1787). Santa Barbara County.
14. Santa Inés (1804). Santa Barbara County.
15. Santa Bárbara (1786). Santa Barbara County.
16. San Buenaventura (1782). Ventura County.



17. San Fernando Rey de España (1797). Los Angeles County.
18. San Gabriel Archangel (1771). Los Angeles County.
19. San Juan Capistrano (1776). Orange County.
20. San Luis Rey de Francia (1798). San Diego County.
21. San Diego de Alcalá (1769). San Diego County.

- **Pueblos:**

1. El Pueblo de San Jose de Guadalupe (1777). Santa Clara County.
2. El Pueblo de Nuestra Senora la Reina de Los Angeles (1781). Los Angeles County.

- **Presidios:**

1. El Presidio de San Francisco (1776). San Francisco County.
2. El Presidio de Monterey (1770). Monterey County.
3. El Presidio de Santa Barbara (1782). Santa Barbara County.
4. El Presidio de San Diego (1769). San Diego County.

El Camino Real started in San Diego, in what is now Presidio Park, near the current SE corner of Taylor St. and Presidio Drive in San Diego (see California Historic Landmark #67). Over time, the original El Camino Real routing was replaced by modern highways, primarily US 101. US 101, overtime, has also been replaced in portions by I-5, Route 72, Route 82, and I-280.



The notion of preserving El Camino Real was first proposed by Miss Anna Pitcher, Director of the Pasadena Art Exhibition Association to the Women's Club of Los Angeles in 1892. Unsuccessful, she tried again with a pitch to the California Federation of Woman's Clubs (CFWC) in May 1902 and to the Native Daughters of the Golden West (NDGW) in June 1902. Both organizations endorsed the idea. The CFWC (principally Mrs. A.S.C. Forbes and Mrs. Caroline Olney) and the NDGW eventually implemented the proposal. In 1904, a group was formed called the El Camino Real Association. This group had the mission to reestablish the road and select a marker design. Mrs. Forbes' (upon a suggestion by Mrs. C.F. Gates) created a marker that was a cast iron bells hung from an eleven-foot bent guidepost. The first bell was placed in 1906 in front of the Old

Plaza Church in downtown Los Angeles. Eventually, there were approx. 158 bells installed along the Camino Real by 1915.

Alas, the bells were not maintained, and by 1926, the bells had fallen into disrepair and some had been stolen. From 1926 to 1931, the California State Automobile Association and the Automobile Club of Southern California assumed responsibility for maintenance and replacement of bells on state-owned property (just as they had responsibility for signage). In fact, the bells often served as highway signage, working as markers for California motorists. By 1949, there were approx. 286 bells along the road.

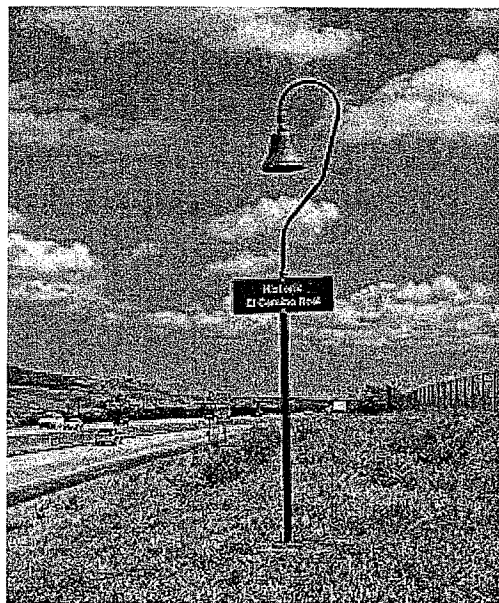
In 1960, Justin Kramer of Los Angeles won the bid to manufacture replacement bells. His design became the standard. Theft and vandalism continued to take its toll, and the number dwindled to about 75.

In 1974 the Legislature appointed Caltrans as guardian of the bells, responsible for repairing or replacing them. Replacements are made of concrete, rather than cast iron, to discourage theft. Along with Los

Angeles County, the bells are located in the counties of Ventura, San Benito, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, San Mateo and Santa Clara. In 1996, Caltrans developed the "Adopt-A-Bell" program (specifically, it was developed by Keith Robinson, who was the Statewide Coordinator of the Caltrans Adopt-A-Highway Program because he had an interest in El Camino Real and the loss of the mission bell markers; it appeared to him to be a good way to get the bell markers back on the highways for the public to recognize the historic route of El Camino Real). After the program was conceived, the California Federation of Womens Clubs was offered the opportunity to adopt as many bells as they could until early 1998. The adoption guidelines were written so that after early 1998 anyone could adopt a bell and maintain it under the Adopt-A-Highway Program.

Up until 2006, the CFWC continued to work to place more bells on El Camino Real in California. Also working on the program were the Automobile Clubs of Northern and Southern California, the Knights of Columbus, The California Sister Cities Program and Various sites in Baja California. In October of 1997, a special bell was erected at Loreto, Baja California Sur, the site of the very first successful mission to be established in the Californias, thus marking the site of the very beginning of El Camino Real. In June of 1998, the California State Dept. of Transportation and the Mexican National Institute of Anthropology and History, in conjunction with CFWC and The Knights of Columbus, dedicated a bell on the international border at the San Ysidro/Tijuana crossing.

In 2000, Keith Robinson, Principal Landscape Architect, Landscape Architecture Program Division of Design of Caltrans applied for and received a federal grant in 2000 to restore El Camino Real Mission bell marker system on the state highways. This grant allowed Caltrans to install bells every one to two miles along El Camino Real from San Francisco through Orange County. San Diego County was not included in the grant as El Camino Real is not on the state highway system within the county. The bells were cast from a mold made from one of the original bells installed before 1910, they are an exact copy of the original bells, unlike the bells installed on or near El Camino Real by the CFWC and others. As of July 2004, 370 new bells have been erected in San Benito, Monterey, San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties. Two additional contracts were in Los Angeles & Ventura Counties (115 bells are being installed) and San Mateo & Santa Clara Counties (70 bells are being installed). All told, 555 new bells will have been added to the El Camino Real Mission Bell Marker System -- the installation was completed in June 2006, just in time for the 100th anniversary of the installation of the original bell in 1906. The bells are placed on both sides of the highway at approximately 1-2 mile intervals. In locations where Caltrans could not find a safe place to install the bells they were not erected - creating a longer gap between bells. The picture (taken by Keith Robinson, and used with permission) shows the first new bell, installed on Route 101 near Camp Roberts.





## Related Links

- Los Angeles Almanac: [Mission Bells on US 101](#)
- [El Camino Real Bell Dedicated](#)
- [El Camino Real and the California Missions](#)
- [California Mission Scholars](#)
- [The California Missions Site](#)
- [California Bell Company](#)
- [The Bells of El Camino Real: Restoring the Original Chimes](#)
- [Geocaching: The Bells of El Camino Real \(locationless\)](#)
- [Ivey Ranch students help restore fading historic El Camino Real bell marker](#)
- [Father Jerimiah Murphy Assembly KoC](#)
- [SR82.COM](#). You've heard of exit lists, right. This is a street-number list. That is, it is a map of everything at a street number along Route 82, with links to the business as appropriate.

There is also excellent information in the book [California's El Camino Real and Its Historic Bells](#) by Max Kurillo and Erline Tuttle (Sunbelt Publications).



## Other El Camino Reals

California cannot lay claim to the only El Camino Real. Some other significant El Camino Reals include:

- **El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro.** This 1,800 mile trail goes from Mexico City to Santa Fe, New Mexico. In the United States, this route runs along approximately I-25 between El Paso TX and Taos NM.
- **El Camino Real de los Tejas.** El Camino Real de los Tejas and variations in the primary route were used for more than 150 years as the principal route between Mexico City, Saltillo, Monclova, and respective presidios, and the missions near the present Guerrero, Coahuila, Mexico, on the Rio Grande and Los Adaes in what is now northwestern Louisiana.

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### Photo Credits:

- Map of El Camino Real. Adapted from a map at the [The California Missions Site](#)
- El Camino Real Bell. From Casey Cooper's [Finding US 101](#)  
<<http://www.gbcbnet.com/ushighways/US101/US101.html>>.



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